

The Riverdale Citizen ***Connection to your Community***

Welcome to the Riverdale Citizen, a bi-monthly electronic publication distributed by the City of Riverdale Division of Community, Cultural Affairs and Leisure Services. The newsletter provides citizens with useful, in-depth information and announcements. It is our goal to advance and promote the image, reputation and recognition of our great City. Previous editions of [*The Riverdale Citizen*](#) are archived online.

Riverdale Department of Public Safety seeks accreditation

Chief Samuel F. Patterson of the Riverdale Department of Public Safety announced several months ago that the city would begin the process of attaining accreditation credentials from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). CALEA provide credentialing services for law enforcement agencies, public safety communication agencies and public safety training academies.

On May 4, 2009, city officials and public safety employees gleamed with pride as they witnessed their hard work materialize into the first indication that the city may soon receive accreditation. A team of assessors from CALEA examined all aspects of the Riverdale Department of Public Safety.

The assessors reviewed written materials, interviewed individuals, and visited offices and other places where compliance could be witnessed. "Achieving accreditation is a highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence," stated Chief Patterson. "There are more than 460 standards that must be met in order to gain accreditation. I am satisfied to report to the citizens that the City of Riverdale met all of the required standards."

The CALEA Accreditation Process is a proven modern management mode that once it is implemented, presents the Chief of Police a blueprint that promotes the efficient use of resources and improves service delivery- regardless of the size, geographic location, or functional responsibilities of the agency.

"Once the assessors complete their review of the agency, they report back to the full Commission who will then decide during the CALEA Summer Conference if the agency is to be granted accreditation," stated Roy Hanson, Accreditation Manager for the Riverdale Department of Public Safety. The CALEA Summer Conference will be held July 29-August 1, 2009 in Hampton, Virginia.



Chief of Police
Samuel F. Patterson



Assistant Chief of Police
R. Todd Spivey

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Riverdale Department of Public Safety

Citizen Testimony

Greetings--My name is Carol Epton-Keitt and I have been a resident of the City of Riverdale since August 2006. My husband and I moved here from New York City. We have always been active in our



community wherever we have lived and moving to Riverdale has been a great experience. Both my parents were community organizers and always instilled the need to give back to the community where you live. I am a graduate of the Citizens Public Safety Academy Class of 2008. From this opportunity I learned a lot about the City of Riverdale and its dedicated Police and Fire Departments, the staff and the community-at-large. I will continue to be an active member and volunteer to the community. From this experience, I was able to begin working for the Riverdale Fire Services as a Fire and Safety Educator in April 2009. I am able to help educate the community with my words and meet a host of honorable and dedicated citizens. I love my job. Thank YOU Riverdale!!!

Encouraging healthy relationships

The City of Riverdale Police Department partnered with Riverdale Elementary School on Saturday, May 9, 2009 for the Encouraging Healthy Relationships seminar. The purpose of the collaboration was to share information and training on how to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

More than 40 attendees were given the opportunity to expand their knowledge in the areas of fiscal management, communication, stress and anger management in addition to receiving pertinent information about teen dating.

Participating vendors included Barbara Fernandez and Gary Dubose from the Clayton County District Attorney's Office. This vendor provided information on the Crime Victim Compensation program that is administered through the District Attorney's Office. This program helps to compensate victims of serious crimes and offers information on how to re-establish their lives.

Also present was Jamie Aliperti from the Atlanta Legal Aid Society who offered a workshop on the services provided by the agency. Atlanta Legal Aid Society's primary function is to provide referrals and legal representation to people who otherwise cannot obtain access to an attorney.

The event Coordinator, Sergeant Nicole Rabel stated, "This event was very successful. Everyone was able to learn something new and talk to professionals about their concerns."

Keeping Riverdale beautiful

In recognition of Georgia Cities Week and National Community Service Day, the City of Riverdale and the Clayton County Adolescent Coalition gathered young people for a day of public service across the county.

Organizers Councilmember Kenny Ruffin and Assistant City Manager Lonnie Ballard coordinated this event not only to clean up the city, but to expose the youth to public service. Some volunteers donated their time to read and assist the elderly at the Sunbridge Nursing Home in Riverdale. Other volunteers planted a garden at the Valley Hill Senior Community and packed books at the Riverdale Presbyterian Church to send to Kenya, Africa.

“It is important that we instill in our youth that community service is something you should want to do; not something you have to do,” stated Councilman Ruffin.

Photo 1—Members of the Riverdale High School Elite Sisterhood, **Photo 2**--Members of the Trinity Fellowship Warriors Basketball Team, **Photo 3**--Volunteers (l-r)-Jackie Adams, City Clerk Stephanie Thomas, Councilman Kenny Ruffin, Melvin Morris, **Photo 4**—Volunteers helping clean up on Roberts Dr.



Savannah Alderman Van Johnson meets with Riverdale Youth Council

Savannah Alderman Van Johnson, who also serves as the Chatham County Youth Commission Director, gave a presentation on May 19, 2009 during the regularly scheduled Riverdale Youth Council meeting. The primary purpose of the presentation was to demonstrate how Youth Councils are established.

“In every thing you do, you must first have a vision...and then you must have someone to champion it. Vision plus champion equals success,” stated Alderman Johnson as he addressed the audience. “Youth Council should be an integral part of local government.”

The newly formed Riverdale Youth Council is comprised of students from Riverdale High School, Riverdale Middle School, Sequoyah Middle School and North Clayton High School. The group works with city officials to address the needs of youth, develop leadership skills and offer programs to address the challenges youths face in Riverdale.

Chatham County's Youth Commission was established approximately 12 years ago. Students have the opportunity to travel across the country and gain valuable life experiences.



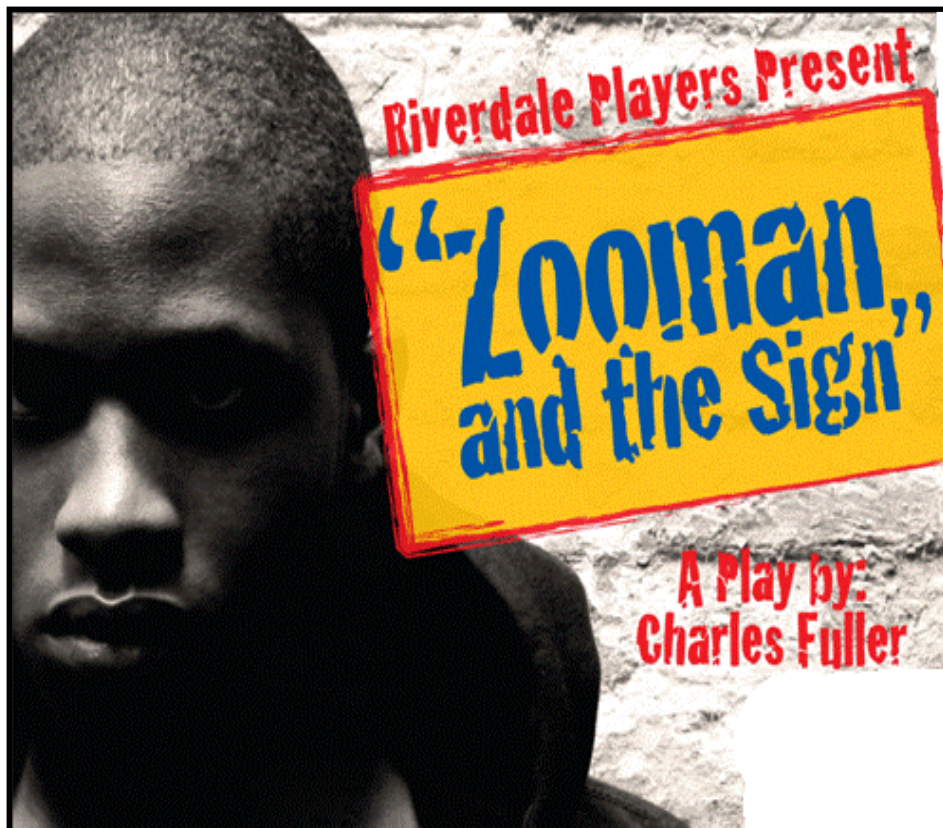
Riverdale Youth Council, Volunteers and City Officials

Broadway comes to Riverdale

The City of Riverdale in collaboration with the Georgia Council for the Arts and Grassroots Arts Program of Georgia held its inaugural production of Charles Fuller's powerful, 1979 Obie-winning drama, "Zooman and the Sign."

"Zooman and the Sign" tackles the issue of urban violence and social responsibility. The character Zooman, an unbridled teen shoots and kills a little girl playing on her own front steps as he attempts to settle the score with an arch street rival.

Lonnie Ballard, Assistant City Manager and Orlando Strozier, Director pulled together a remarkable cast of actors. The troupe, better known as The Riverdale Players, took the audience on a whirlwind of emotions throughout the duration of the almost two-hour long performance.



The talented cast consists of Lonnie Ballard as Emmet Tate, Orlando Strozier as Rueban Tate, Stephanie Thomas as Ash Boswell, Zeek Mayes as Zooman, Diane Thomas as Rachel Tate, Jayla Smith as Raquel Adams, Brittany Webb and Yakeyta Williams as Grace Georges, Shawn Jeter as Donald Jackson and Malik Carter and Brandon E. Smith as Victor Tate. The cast captures the relevance of the storyline and effectively conveys its timeless message. "This Off-Broadway play is a timeless reminder of the dangers of becoming desensitized to violence and crime," said Ballard.

On the second night of the play, the cast was visited backstage by Disney star, Kyle Massey of "That's So Raven" and "Corey in the House" and his brother Chris Massey of Nickelodeon's "Zoey 101." The child stars raved the dramatic performances of the cast.

Riverdale Mayor Dr. Evelyn Wynn Dixon praises the inaugural work of the city's newest acting troupe, the Riverdale Players. "This is another first for our great City. We know that the arts play a major role in economic development and cultural commerce is vital to the health and wellness of communities. I believe community theatre is a wonderful way to attract visitors to Riverdale and the county. To my knowledge, there are no community theatres in Clayton, so we are making this artistic form available and affordable to our citizens in their own backyards."

One spectator quoted, "As I watched the play, I shared the family's sorrow; I was angry at the neighbors because of their betrayal, I laughed 'til it hurt each time Cousin Ash, (played by Riverdale's City Clerk, Stephanie Thomas) and Uncle Emmet (portrayed by Lonnie Ballard, Assistant City Manager) entered the stage. I wanted to take vengeance for the family myself during Zooman's monologues."

When asked if there would be additional shows, Ballard said, "This is the first of many more plays to come." Mr. Ballard encourages interested persons to check the city's website at www.riverdalega.gov or call 770-997-8989 for updates.

Are you facing foreclosure?

Help is here...

Due to the recent downturn in the U.S. economy and the skyrocketing mortgage foreclosure rates, many local residents are searching for some form of assistance or guidance. The Associated Press recently released Georgia as seventh nationally in the number of home foreclosures for the month of April 2009. The report showed 595 homes in Clayton County received foreclosure notices.



If foreclosure is a concern for you, attend one of the City of Riverdale's FREE Pre-Foreclosure Housing Seminars. Councilwoman Wanda Wallace, along with Denese Johnson of the NID Housing Counseling Agency, are sponsoring FREE Pre-Foreclosure Housing Seminars designed to educate and assist homeowners in the areas of loan modification, restructuring loans, rate reduction and how to avoid home foreclosure rescue recovery scams. The seminars will also share information on President Barack Obama's Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan.

Councilwoman Wanda Wallace stated, "We know there are homeowners who refinanced or purchased a home with an adjustable rate mortgage that may be facing an increase in their monthly mortgage payment. Come to the Pre-Foreclosure Housing Seminars and learn how to save your home."

There will be ongoing monthly sessions for the remainder of 2009. Plan to attend.

FREE Pre-Foreclosure Housing Seminars

May 26, 2009	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
June 11, 2009	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
June 23, 2009	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
July 9, 2009	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
July 21, 2009	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

**750 Main Street
Riverdale, Georgia 30274**

**For more information:
Contact Denese Johnson at 678-884-0221
or Councilwoman Wanda Wallace at 770-997-8989
Space is limited -- You must RSVP**

Two students receive the Ben Carson Scholarship

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson Sr. is a full professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery, and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and he has directed pediatric neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center for nearly a quarter of a century. Each year, Dr. Carson Sr. and his wife dedicate their time and resources to naming a Carson Scholar in every state within the United States.

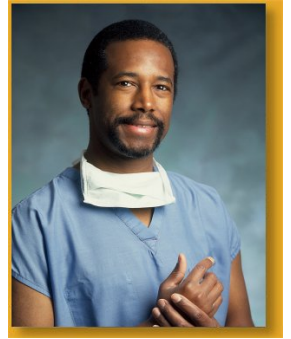


Photo: left-Councilman Kenny Ruffin, center-Ricchedia Brown and her parents.

Abhilasha Lull was unable to attend the meeting

Councilmember Kenny Ruffin had the distinct opportunity last year to meet Dr. Carson Sr. and soon afterward discovered the Carson Scholars Fund that awards one thousand dollar (\$1,000) college scholarships to students in grades 4 through 11 who excel academically and are dedicated to serving their communities.

Councilmember Ruffin has been a champion for local children to participate in the Carson Scholars Program. Ruffin's tenacity and dedication has materialized into two Riverdale students being named-Carson Scholars.

"If Dr. Carson can reach such levels of high success, so can the students here in Riverdale. We charge young people with staying on the right path; however, we have a role in the process as well. We have to remain committed to our youth by continuing to offer enrichment programs and support."

Ricchedia Brown and Abhilasha Lull, were publicly recognized as Ben Carson Scholars by the governing body during the May 11, 2009 Mayor and Council Meeting. Councilman Ruffin awarded the honorees with a proclamation. "I am elated that our students received such a distinguished honor. This is what it is all about," Ruffin stated.

Riverdale Middle School student recognized for her exemplary academic achievements

Ashley Brooks received a proclamation from the City of Riverdale in recognition of her exemplary qualities of leadership, dedication and excellent record as a student at Riverdale Middle School.

Ashley was chosen as one of three representatives from Georgia to attend the Junior National Young Leaders Conference (JrNYLC) held in Washington, D.C. on March 8-13, 2009. While there, Ms. Brooks joined a select group of Middle school scholars from around the country for a life-changing educational experience.

The JrNYLC offers high-achieving middle school students the opportunity to learn about leadership by studying the leaders of the past and by focusing on social advocacy to make a positive impact in their homes and communities.



Ashley Brooks, Councilman Kenny Ruffin & Melissa Brooks, mother and President of the Riverdale Middle School student body



Riverdale High student receives State Excellence Award

Riverdale High Senior Osayande Imarhiagbe is one of eight Georgia students that received an Excellence in Career and Technology award that was presented by Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools, at the Excellence Recognition Program held Wednesday, April 1. The winners were selected from a pool of elected officers of Georgia student organizations.



In making the presentation Cox said, "Imarhiagbe served as state treasurer of the Technology Student Association (TSA) and as president of the Riverdale High Chapter. He is a state and national award-winning website designer and works on the Clayton County Public Schools website."

In addition, he is creating a Teen Driving Site at the request of the Georgia Department of Transportation. He soon will be featured in its statewide news magazine. His TSA chapter website has been selected by the national publication, Tech Direction Magazine, as the "Website of the Month." He and his Engineering and Tech Education teacher, Steve Price, were interviewed and will be featured in an upcoming issue.

Mayor and Council Retreat

The Mayor and Council held its annual retreat on May 16, 2009. The purpose of the retreat was to provide Mayor and Council with an opportunity to talk about challenges, opportunities, goals and action plans for the upcoming year.

The governing body discussed issues that affect them as the governing body and the citizenry of Riverdale.

Topics of discussion were:

- For the council to be successful, what do we need or expect from each other?
- For this council to be successful, what do we need or expect from staff?
- For staff to be successful, what do you need or expect from council members?
- **Cohesiveness of the Governing Body** (*Respect for perspectives and position, relations on Council, Ethics and Code of Conduct, meeting procedures, communication and listening, meeting civility - compliance by the governing body with the Civility Resolution adopted on January 14, 2008, assuring that the governing body understands what its role is and how the body should interact with appointed officials and staff members, and focusing on the positive*)
- **Economic Development and Economic Stimulus** (*job growth*)
- **Expand Housing Initiatives** (*Unstable housing market, foreclosures*)
- **Annexation Strategy** (*Expand boundaries to accommodate future growth*)
- **Revenue Enhancement** (*Increase and diversify tax base by bringing in quality businesses--increase revenues without increasing taxes*)
- **Citizen Engagement and Education** (*Voter apathy - citizen education*)
- **Improve and Stabilize Education System** (*Youth challenges and how to assist youth in becoming work-ready and civic-minded*)

Effective action plans were shared by members present (Mayor Evelyn Wynn-Dixon, Councilwoman Wanda Wallace, Councilman Kenny Ruffin, City Manager Iris Jessie & City Clerk Stephanie Thomas). The facilitator was Mr. Maner, a highly respected facilitator of the Carl Vinson Institute. Prior to joining the Institute, Mr. Maner spent more than 20 years in Georgia local governments in various management roles. He holds graduate degrees in psychology and in public administration from West Georgia University.





MOVIES ON THE LAWN



Come watch your favorite Movies on the Lawn at:
Riverdale Middle School, 400 Roberts Drive (next to Wal-Mart)
 in Riverdale. Bring your blankets, lawn chairs and picnic
 baskets and leave the family entertainment to us!
 The movie begins at dusk (usually around 8:30 PM!)

June Showing:
Sat. 6/13/09 - Hotel for Dogs

July Showing:
Sat. 7/11/09 - Kung Fu Panda
(Movies are subject to change. For more information call 770.909.5385)

FREE MOVIES!

Sponsored by:
 Riverdale Division of Community,
 Cultural Affairs & Leisure Services





RIVERDALE ARE YOU READY?

For an evening of
Smooth Jazz and R & B
featuring **ANTONIO ALLEN**
(formerly of Five Men on a Stool)
and the
TUFF ENUFF BAND

FREE CONCERT

**FEATURING SAXOPHONIST
ANTONIO ALLEN**

THURSDAY

JUNE 11, 2009

6:00 PM

**ON THE GROUNDS OF RIVERDALE CITY HALL
6690 CHURCH ST.
(770) 909-5385**

Bring your lawn chairs

www.riverdalega.gov

Provided by Riverdale Division of Community, Cultural Affairs and Leisure Services